SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE AND NEED

1.1.1 Background

Transit Mixed Concrete Company (TMC), a division of Southdown, Inc., is proposing to establish a sand and gravel mining operation in Soledad Canyon, Los Angeles County (County), California. The Proposed Action (Project) involves mining up to 56.1 million tons of sand and gravel over a 20-year period to fulfill contracts (Federal Contracts) that TMC entered into with the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM). During the first 10 years of the Project (Phase 1), it is estimated that between 1.4 and 2.15 million tons per year of product will be produced. The latter amount represents the basis for analysis of environmental impacts annually during Phase 1. During the next 10 years of the Project (Phase 2), it is estimated that up to 4.2 million tons per year of product will be produced. The Project includes plans to operate a concrete batch plant to produce and deliver ready-mixed concrete to the local market.

1.1.1.1 Site History

The Project proposes mining of sand and gravel on a site that has been mined for much of the past 30 years. From 1968 to approximately 1986, the previous operator mined several million tons of sand and gravel material from the site. A significant portion of mining by the previous operator was conducted in accordance with a conditional use permit (CUP) issued by the County in 1972 for sand and gravel mining purposes, which expired in 1992. Approximately 45 acres of the site remain disturbed, and unreclaimed, from this previous mining operation. The prior operation included an aggregate crushing mill and processed material stockpile areas and access roads, all of which were located on the only relatively flat area of the site on the southeast corner of the site. The Project also proposes to locate an aggregate crushing mill, processed material stockpile areas, and access roads on the same relatively flat area of the site.

The mining operation of the previous operator terminated after it was determined, pursuant to a ruling of the United States Supreme Court in 1983, that the sand and gravel minerals on the site were owned by the United States of America. Following commencement of an enforcement action by the United States, a settlement was reached with the previous operator in which it was agreed by the parties to put the rights to mine sand and gravel from the entire site up for public competitive bid.

In 1989, the BLM prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to analyze the impacts of the proposed sand and gravel sale. The BLM issued a decision record approving the sale with a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) statement. In issuing the FONSI, the BLM also committed to analyze the impacts of the project operations (Mining and Reclamation Plan) at a later date.

In 1989, the BLM published a Notice of Sand and Gravel Sale to be held by public competitive bid. This sale was conducted in accordance with the ordered stipulation for compromise settlement by the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California (referred to in Section 1.1.1 above), the Minerals Act of July 31, 1947 (Materials Act of 1947), and other applicable laws and regulations. Sealed bids were opened at a public bid meeting on September 15, 1989, at the BLM, California Desert District, Palm Springs-South Coast Resource Area Office. The successful bidder was determined to be Transmix Corporation, then doing business as Transit Mixed Concrete Company.

Subsequent to the successful bid, a Mining and Reclamation Plan was developed by TMC and submitted to the BLM in May 1990. The plan was prepared to meet the requirements of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) and all applicable federal laws, as well as the California Code of Regulations (California Administrative Code Title 14), the Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975 (Public Resources Code §§2710 et seq; SMARA), and the County Planning and Zoning Code. TMC submitted an application to the County for the surface mining permit, along with the accompanying Mining and Reclamation Plan in 1991.

1.1.1.2 Agency Approvals and Reviews

Because the surface is privately owned and the subsurface mineral resources are administered by BLM, the County and BLM are both responsible for analyzing and approving the Mining and Reclamation Plan (1996). The County has chosen to prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to support its discretionary consideration of the mining plan. BLM is therefore satisfying NEPA requirements through preparation of a separate Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Due to the potential impact on the federally listed endangered unarmored threespine stickleback (*Gasterosteus aculeatus williamsoni*), the BLM has taken the lead for compliance with the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, and has conducted formal consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) under Section 7 of the act. The results of the USFWS Biological Opinion, which is a non-jeopardy opinion, will be icorporated into BLM's Decision Record on the project.

This EIS is intended to provide information to public agencies, the general public, and agency decision-makers regarding the potential significant short- and long-term impacts and effects associated with implementation of the Proposed Action. A further purpose of the EIS is to investigate feasible ways to avoid or significantly reduce potential environmental impacts through analysis of alternatives and recommendation of mitigation measures.

In accordance with NEPA, the BLM as the Lead Agency published a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare a Draft EIS for the Proposed Action. The NOI was published in the Federal Register on October 16, 1995, and provided interested groups, individuals, and agencies a 30-day comment period. Appendix A includes a copy of the written comments responding to the NOI.

The Draft EIS (DEIS) prepared for the Project was published May 1999 and distributed for public review. The DEIS provides an analysis of the environmental impacts associated with TMC's proposed Project. The DEIS provides documentation of the potential direct and indirect environmental impacts of the Project and serves as an agency decision-making tool for Project approval.

A Supplemental Draft EIS (SDEIS) was published in November 1999. The SDEIS included the following three items:

- Identification of the Agency-Preferred Alternative;
- Supplemental air quality information; and
- Clarification and reorganization of alternatives addressed in the DEIS.

The public comment period for both the DEIS and the SDEIS closed on January 10, 2000. Public comments for both the DEIS and the SDEIS are addressed in this Final EIS (FEIS).

It is anticipated that implementation of the Proposed Action will require discretionary approvals from several agencies in addition to BLM. A list of the anticipated agency approvals required to implement the Proposed Action is presented in Table 1.1-1.

1.1.2 Project Purpose and Objectives

TMC proposes to mine the site in accordance with the Federal Contracts to produce Portland Cement Concrete sand and gravel (PCC) aggregates. According to the Federal Contracts with the BLM, TMC will produce 56.1 million tons of PCC aggregates and pay the Federal Government $28 million in royalties. In general, the use of construction minerals, including PCC aggregate, in the greater Los Angeles area continues at a high rate, and existing regional quarries are depleting their remaining reserves. The consumption rate of construction aggregate for the greater Los Angeles area averages 3.4 tons per person per year (CDMG 1994) although the rate varies substantially between Production-Consumption (P-C) regions (discussed in Section 1.1.2.3).

The Project would continue to develop the source of PCC aggregate and provide construction resources to the region. The intended products of the Project include sand and gravel, crushed aggregate base, crushed rock products, nonspecification fill material, possibly some riprap, and ready-mixed concrete. The primary intent is to produce PCC aggregates and crushed rock products with base, fill material, and riprap produced only as byproducts of the sand and gravel mining. Some of the sand and gravel produced onsite will be used for onsite production of ready-mixed concrete. The bulk of the sand and gravel, however, is proposed to be transported to TMC's existing concrete batch plants in the greater Los Angeles area. TMC also intends to sell sand and gravel to other consumers of sand and gravel products in the Santa Clarita Valley and the greater Los Angeles area. Therefore, the purpose and objectives of the Project are to

Table 1.1-1

ANTICIPATED AGENCY APPROVALS AND REVIEWS

Agency	Approval or Review
County of Los Angeles	- Surface Mining Permit - Reclamation Plan and Financial Assurance - Building Permits - CEQA Compliance
Los Angeles County Department of Health, Local Enforcement Agency	- Hazardous Materials Handler Permit
California Department of Conservation, Division of Mines and Geology	- Review of Surface Mining and Reclamation Plan - Review of Financial Assurance
California Regional Water Quality Control Board	- General Industrial Activities Stormwater Permit pursuant to National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System - Section 401 Water Quality Certification
California State Water Resources Control Board	- Permit to Appropriate Water
South Coast Air Quality Management District	- Permits for Fueling and Maintenance Facilities, Equipment Operations, Dust Emissions Discharge
U.S. Department of the Army, Corps of Engineers	- Section 404 Clean Water Act Permit
California Department of Fish and Game	- Section 1603 Stream or Lake Alteration Permit
U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management	- Mining and Reclamation Plan - National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Compliance - Financial Assurance
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	- Biological Assessment and Opinion

- provide a reliable and economically sound source of construction minerals primarily for the Santa Clarita Valley and the greater Los Angeles area,

- develop construction mineral reserves in the Saugus-Newhall P-C Region in an area designated as a Regionally Significant Construction Aggregate Resource Area by the State of California,

- develop a source of ready-mixed concrete for the Santa Clarita Valley,

- mine the Project site to produce 56.1 million tons of PCC aggregates and provide $28 million in royalties to the Federal Government in accordance with the Federal Contracts; and

- provide for the environmentally sound and economically feasible reclamation of the site.

Some other geologic minerals, including gold, may be present in trace amounts at the site and are incidental to the proposed sand, gravel, and aggregate operation. TMC's mining plan does not provide for recovery and processing of such minerals nor do the Federal Contracts provide

for such recovery and processing. Because there will be no processing of materials other than sand and gravel, there will be no potential for pollution associated with gold mining such as cyanide leaching that can occur from processing gold.

1.1.2.1 Need for Aggregate Reserves

Existing aggregate reserves for Los Angeles County, which includes the Saugus-Newhall, Palmdale, San Gabriel Valley, and San Fernando Valley P-C Regions, will be depleted over the next several years. A summary of aggregate resources, reserves, and consumption for the four primary Los Angeles County P-C regions is presented in Section 1.1.2.3. Reserves are defined as aggregate materials that a sand and gravel company owns or controls and for which it has a valid mining permit. Resources are defined as the total amount of aggregate potentially available within an area.

When the existing aggregate reserves are depleted, the Los Angeles market will become dependent on reserves at more distant production locations. Limited recycling of aggregate occurs, but recycling does not represent a significant source of construction material because quality problems with the recycled material preclude its use in many construction applications. For example, California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) specifications forbid the use of recycled aggregate in PCC for its projects (CDMG 1985).

Because aggregates are a low value-to-weight commodity, transportation costs determine whether a particular quarry or production location is competitive and/or profitable relative to a given market. It is generally agreed that as regional reserves are depleted, regional costs of sand and gravel will increase. As the cost of these basic building materials increases, so will the cost of new construction and maintenance of existing facilities and infrastructure. The price of aggregate in the Los Angeles market will increase in the coming years in direct relation/response to changing quarry locations, with the more advantageously positioned quarries being able to provide aggregate at a lower price. Because public agencies are the primary customers of aggregate products, increased costs associated with bringing materials from distant production locations will be passed on to the taxpayers.

1.1.2.2 Need for State Classification and Designation of Regionally Significant Construction Aggregate Resource Areas

SMARA mandates that the State Geologist classify lands into mineral resource zones (MRZs), and where appropriate, the State Mining and Geology Board (SMGB) designates such zones for regional significance. The objective of the classification-designation process is to provide local agencies (e.g., cities and counties) with information on the location, need, and importance of mineral resources within their jurisdictions. The State Geologist prepares a classification report based on a geological inventory of mineral commodities within a defined study region. The major objectives of a classification report are (1) identification of the market area of the commodity (i.e., a P-C region), (2) projection of future (50-year) needs for the commodity

within the study region, and (3) geologic classification of lands within the region as to the presence or absence of the commodity.

Classification of mineral lands by the State Geologist is solely on the basis of geological factors and does not consider land use. Following are the four types of MRZ classifications issued:

- MRZ-1: Areas where adequate information indicates that no significant mineral deposits are present or where it is judged that little likelihood exists for their presence.
- MRZ-2: Areas where adequate information indicates that significant mineral deposits are present or where it is judged that a high likelihood for their presence exists.
- MRZ-3: Areas containing mineral deposits, the significance of which cannot be evaluated from available data.
- MRZ-4: Area where available information is inadequate for assignment to any other MRZ zone.

As an aid to local planning agencies, classification reports prepared for metropolitan areas also identify MRZ-2 areas that have not been urbanized. These nonurbanized areas are called "resource sectors" and are important because of their potential availability for future use.

Once the classification report is completed, the SMGB begins the second step of the process: designation of deposits that are of regional or statewide significance. Designation differs from classification in that the area's land use is also considered to assess significance. The classification report and designation information are transmitted to the appropriate Lead Agencies as they are completed. The local agencies are required under Section 2762(a) of SMARA to establish mineral resource management policies in their General Plans within 12 months after receipt of the classification/designation information. The General Plan mineral resource policies must (1) recognize the mineral resource information classified by SMGB, (2) assist in the management of land uses that affect areas of regional significance, and (3) emphasize the conservation and development of the identified mineral deposits.

A Lead Agency's land use decisions are required under SMARA to be in accordance with its mineral resource management policies. Also, a Lead Agency must balance mineral value against alternative land uses and consider the importance of the designated resources to their market as a whole and not just to the Lead Agency's area of jurisdiction. Lead Agencies are required to submit mineral resource management policies to the SMGB for review and comment prior to adopting the policies.

Any subsequent amendment to mineral resource management policies also requires SMGB review and comment.

In addition to summarizing or incorporating by reference the state classification and/or designation reports and maps, and adopting statements of policy in accordance with SMARA, the Lead Agencies' mineral resource management policies are also required by SMARA to

include implementation procedures for recognizing and protecting mineral resources. These implementation procedures must include the two following measures (California Code of Regulations 1989):

- reference in the General Plan of the location of identified mineral deposits and a discussion of areas targeted for conservation and possible future excavation by the Lead Agency, and

- use of overlay maps or inclusion of information on appropriate planning maps that clearly identify mineral deposits and those areas targeted by the Lead Agency for conservation and possible future extraction.

Implementation shall also include at least one of the following:

- use of special-purpose overlay zones, mineral resource/open space zoning, or any other appropriate zoning that identifies the presence of identified mineral deposits and restricts the encroachment of incompatible land uses in those areas that are to be conserved;

- record, on property titles in the affected mineral resource areas, a notice identifying the presence of identified mineral deposits; and/or

- impose conditions upon incompatible land uses in and surrounding areas containing identified mineral deposits for the purpose of mitigating the significant land use conflicts prior to approving a use that would otherwise be incompatible with mineral extraction.

SMGB has also developed land use categories to guide local governments in establishing land uses on or adjacent to lands that have been designated as Regionally Significant such as the TMC mining site. These land use categories are as follows (CDMG 1987b):

- Incompatible - land uses that are inherently incompatible with mining and/or require high public or private investment in structures, land improvements, and landscaping that would prevent mining because of the elevated value of the improved land. Examples of incompatible uses include high-density residential, low-density residential with high unit value, public facilities, intensive industrial, and commercial.

- Compatible - land uses that are inherently compatible with mining and/or require a low public or private investment in structures, land improvements, and landscaping and that would allow mining because of the low economic value of the land and its improvements. Examples of compatible uses include very low-density residential (e.g., one unit per 10 acres), extensive industrial, public/commercial recreation, agricultural, silvicultural, grazing, and open space.

- Interim - land uses that require structures, land improvements, and landscaping of a limited useful life and, from an economic and political standpoint, can be converted to mining at the end of that limited life.

Table 1.1-2 indicates the steps taken for a designation of Regionally Significant resources in the Saugus-Newhall P-C Region, which includes the TMC Soledad Canyon site.

Table 1.1-2

STEPS TAKEN FOR DESIGNATION OF REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT RESOURCES IN THE SAUGUS-NEWHALL P-C REGION

Date	Steps Taken
August 27, 1984	Classification report for the Saugus-Newhall and Palmdale P-C Regions accepted by SMGB
Mid-October 1984	Classification report transmitted to Lead Agencies
March 7, 1985	Public hearing on the Draft EIR for Saugus-Newhall and Palmdale P-C Regions
July 26, 1985	Final EIR distributed
August 19, 1985	Final EIR certified by SMGB
November 15, 1985/ January 31, 1986	Public hearings held in Palm Desert and Santa Rosa, respectively, to receive testimony concerning designation of resources in Saugus-Newhall and Palmdale P-C Regions, as well as several other P-C regions
October 2, 1986	Regulations formally adopted by Resolution #86-7 describing areas designated as Regionally Significant in the Saugus-Newhall and Palmdale P-C Regions
January 3, 1987	Effective date of incorporation of regulations describing areas of regional significance into the California Administrative Code as Section 3550.9 (Title 14, Division 2, Chapter 8, Subchapter 1, Article 2)

The County General Plan implements this state policy in several ways. Policy 11 of the General Plan's Land Use Chapter states: "Protect known mineral resource reserves (including sand and gravel) from encroachment of incompatible land uses." Condition and Standard No. 16 of the General Plan Land Use Element (Appendix A) states: "Within identified mineral resource areas, proposed development other than open space, passive recreation, agriculture, extraction or surface mining shall be reviewed for compatibility with existing or potential mineral resource production." Factors in the review include "[t]he value of mineral resources located within the vicinity of the proposed development." "Mineral resources areas" are defined by the General Plan to include "areas identified or to be identified as containing significant mineral resources by the State Mining and Geology Board."

1.1.2.3 Marketing Factors of Aggregate Reserves for the Greater Los Angeles Area and Santa Clarita Valley Markets

Sand and gravel are low-value bulk commodities that are expensive to import from outside of the region. Therefore, it is appropriate to measure the significance of these resources on a regional level. The CDMG has divided the County into six separate aggregate P-C regions.

One step in the mineral land classification-designation process was to forecast the needs for aggregate in each P-C region over the coming 50 years. The CDMG published a series of original reports dated from 1979 to 1987 that cover a series of studies conducted for aggregate production periods of 1960 through 1979/80 for the County. In 1994, the CDMG published an update report that covers the production period of 1980/82 through 1992 for the County. The 1994 CDMG Update Report is located in Technical Appendix G. The next regularly scheduled CDMG report is expected to cover the production period from 1992 to 2002 and could be published in 2004.

Each P-C region encompasses a group of aggregate producers that share a common market or production district. The boundaries of the P-C regions are primarily based on a comparative analysis of haulage costs for the districts. In order to determine the boundaries, minimum transportation rates reported by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) were plotted on delivery zone maps of the entire area. Boundaries were then drawn along rock product delivery zones according to which production district could deliver aggregate at the least fixed minimum rate (CDMG 1979). The P-C regional boundaries established by this method were subsequently evaluated and modified using producers' delivery records. There is a moderate amount of overlap among the regions and, as reserves are depleted in some regions, the degree of overlap is expected to increase.

The bulk of the County is served by four P-C regions: the Saugus-Newhall, Palmdale, San Fernando Valley, and San Gabriel Valley regions. The Project is in the Saugus-Newhall P-C Region. The Project will primarily serve the Santa Clarita Valley (Saugus-Newhall region) and the greater Los Angeles area (San Fernando Valley and San Gabriel Valley regions). As reserves are depleted in the San Fernando Valley P-C Region, increased reliance on the resources of the Saugus-Newhall and San Gabriel Valley P-C Regions will occur.

Per capita consumption rates of aggregate vary over time and differ for each P-C region. Factors such as urban growth, degree of urban maturity, economic conditions, and proximity to a major construction project (e.g., freeways) account for some of this variability. For example, the Santa Clarita Valley, a developing area, has had a relatively high per capita consumption rate of 9.9 tons per year, whereas the San Fernando Valley, a mature urban area, has had a per capita consumption rate of 3.1 tons per year.

A summary of each P-C region's estimated reserves, annual consumption, projected growth rate, and potential year of depletion is presented in Table 1.1-3. A discussion of each P-C region is presented below.

- Saugus Newhall P-C Region

  This P-C region includes the upper Santa Clara River Valley and a large area in the hills to the north (a total of 651 square miles). According to the 1994 CDMG report, the total unpermitted PCC-grade aggregate resources in the Saugus-Newhall P-C Region in 1994 were estimated to be 7,439 million tons.

Table 1.1-3
CHARACTERISTICS OF EACH P-C REGION

P-C Region	1994 Reserves[1] (million tons)	1994 Estimated Annual Consumption[2] (million tons/year)	Estimated Average Population Growth Rate[3] (%)	Estimated Year of Depletion[4]
Saugus-Newhall	158	1.7	4.1	2016
San Fernando Valley	50[5]	8.0	1.0	2001
San Gabriel Valley	334	15.5	1.0	2016
Palmdale	207	2.8	1.5	2016
Los Angeles County (as a whole)	750[6]	28.0	1.1	2016

1 Aggregate reserves for all regions except the San Fernando Valley are taken from the 1994 CDMG report.
2 1994 annual consumption rates are estimated based on the 1994 CDMG report.
3 Population and population growth rates are based on information obtained from the Department of Finance, Southern California Association of Governments and the 1994 CDMG report.
4 The estimated year of depletion is based on the annual consumption rate adjusted for population growth during the period addressed, the depletion of SFV reserves in 2001, and the depletion of all regions by 2016.
5 Aggregate reserves for the San Fernando Valley are estimated from data for the other regions and could have ranged from 20 to 80 million tons for 1994.
6 The 1994 CDMG report rounded aggregate reserves for the County to the nearest 50 million tons to protect confidential San Fernando Valley data.

The total permitted PCC-grade aggregate reserves in the Saugus-Newhall P-C Region as of January 1994 were estimated at 158 million tons. In 1987, the projected aggregate demand for the period from 1982 to 1992 was estimated to be 9.17 million tons. According to the 1994 CDMG report, actual aggregate production for the Saugus-Newhall P-C Region for that period was approximately 13.56 millions tons, almost 48 percent more than projected. The average per capita consumption during this time period was only slightly less than projected, 9.9 tons per year versus 10 tons per year. Thus, the increase in actual aggregate production versus projected production can be attributed to a greater-than-predicted population increase for the region.

Since 1986, permitted resources for the Saugus-Newhall P-C Region have decreased by 265 million tons, representing approximately 60 percent of the 1986 reserves. This decrease is due in part to the Project site, which was permitted in 1986 but is no longer permitted. Approval of the Project will add 56 million tons to reserves for the region.

- Palmdale P-C Region

The Palmdale P-C Region encompasses the desert area of the County north of the San Gabriel Mountains, including the communities of Palmdale and Lancaster (a total of 1,103 square miles). In 1994, nonpermitted resources for the region totaled 1,769 million tons.

The total permitted PCC-grade aggregate reserves in the region as of January 1994 were 207 million tons.

The 1984 report of mineral land classification of aggregate resources in the Palmdale P-C Region projected that aggregate demand for the years from 1982 to 1992 would be 17.7 million tons. According to the 1994 CDMG report, actual aggregate production for the Palmdale P-C Region for the period was 24.4 million tons, an increase of 37 percent. Average per capita consumption for 1982 to 1992 was 12.7 tons per year versus a projected 12.2 tons per year. Thus, the increase in actual aggregate consumption versus that projected in the 1984 report appears to be due to a greater-than-predicted increase in population for the region.

- San Fernando Valley P-C Region

This P-C region covers the southwest section of the County. Sand and gravel resources in the San Fernando Valley P-C Region are associated with a broad system of coalescing alluvial fans that fill the valley floor. However, only the deposits in the eastern portion of the valley are a suitable source of PCC-aggregate (CDMG 1979). Significant sand and gravel deposits within the San Fernando Valley P-C Region occur within the Tujunga alluvial fan and the Pacoima Wash. In 1994, the San Fernando Valley P-C Region had 259 million tons of unpermitted PCC-grade aggregate resources. For confidentiality purposes, data on permitted PCC-grade reserves are not given in the 1994 CDMG report. However, the report does state that reserves for this region are expected to be depleted by the year 2001.

The 1979 report of mineral land classification of aggregate resources in the San Fernando Valley P-C Region projected that aggregate demand for the years 1980 to 1992 would be about 58 million tons. According to the 1994 CDMG report, actual aggregate production for the region for that period was approximately 122 million tons, an increase of 111 percent. The average per capita aggregate consumption rate for the period was 3.1 tons per year versus the projected consumption rate of 1.6 tons per year. The increase in actual aggregate consumption versus projected consumption for the San Fernando Valley P-C Region is attributed to both a greater increase in population than predicted and a surge in economic growth.

- San Gabriel Valley P-C Region

The San Gabriel Valley P-C Region encompasses the southeastern portion of the County and includes the aggregate production areas of the Cities of Irwindale and Azusa. Nonpermitted resources within the San Gabriel Valley P-C Region were estimated to total 1,645 million tons in 1994, with almost all of those resources contained in the San Gabriel River alluvial fan. Reserves in January 1994 were estimated at 334 million tons.

It was estimated in 1982 that approximately 205 million tons of aggregate would be required to satisfy demand in the San Gabriel Valley P-C Region for the period from 1980 to 1992. As stated in the 1994 CDMG report, actual production for the region for that period was 216 million tons, representing a 5-percent increase. The actual per capita consumption for the

region was 4.0 tons per year, 7 percent lower than the projected consumption rate of about 4.28 tons per year.

At the time of the 1987 CDMG report, the County had a calculated annual demand of 23 million tons per year and reserves of 830 million tons. As of the 1994 report, the County had a demand of 28 million tons per year and about 750 million tons of reserves. As Table 1.1-4 shows, during the period from when the original reports were published (1979-1987) until the update in 1994, population and calculated annual demand increased by 22 percent. During this same period, resources and reserves declined.

In the CDMG reports, projected consumption for the County was calculated by determining an average annual per capita consumption rate for the County and multiplying that by the projected population for the County. The average annual per capita consumption rate of 3.4 tons per year used in the report is based on a weighted average of the actual per capita consumption rates of each region for the 27-year period from 1966 through 1992. This period includes two recessionary periods, as well as the building boom of the late 1980s, and does not include the Northridge earthquake. Projected population for each region was estimated from official projections published by the California Department of Finance in May 1993.

The 1994 CDMG report estimates that current reserves in the County will run out by the year 2016 unless new reserves are permitted. The CDMG report notes that aggregate demand could change considerably due to unforeseen events such as massive urban renewal, reconstruction in the wake of an earthquake, or a major economic recession. In fact, actual County consumption for the period from 1982 to 1992 exceeded estimated consumption for the period by 24 percent. If future aggregate demand were to exceed projected demand by 20 percent, current reserves would be depleted by the year 2013. If future aggregate demand were to be 20 percent less than projected, current reserves could last until the year 2021.

The CDMG report also notes that aggregate reserves in the San Fernando Valley P-C Region will be depleted by the year 2001. As this occurs, the San Fernando Valley P-C Region will become increasingly dependent on the Saugus-Newhall and San Gabriel Valley P-C Regions to meet its needs. Based on the 1994 CDMG report, the combined reserves for these three regions (San Fernando Valley, San Gabriel Valley, and the Saugus-Newhall) are about 543 million tons, and the combined consumption rate for the three regions is about 90 percent of the total of the County. At the projected rates presented in the CDMG report, the combined 1994 reserves for the three regions could be depleted by the year 2012. A variation in actual demand of ± 20 percent would result in depletion occurring between the years 2010 and 2016.

The cost and time required to open a new mine are constantly rising due to increasing regulation and environmental requirements. The number of mines operating in the County has decreased from 19 at the time of the original reports to 16 in 1994. The current lead time to bring a new mine on line is approximately 6 to 9 years: 5 to 6 years for permitting and 1 to 3 years for facility construction and startup.

Table 1.1-4
COMPARISON OF ESTIMATES TO
ACTUAL USAGE IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY

	CDMG Original Reports (1979-1987)	CDMG Updated Reports (1994)	Percent Change
Resources (million tons)	12,800	11,900	- 7
Reserves (million tons)	830	750	-10
Population (millions)	6.8	8.3	+22
Calculated Annual Consumption (million tons)	23	28	+22
PCC Mines	19	16	-16

The CDMG projects aggregate need for 50 years and updates its report at least every 10 years. If the CDMG reports every 10 years and it takes up to 9 years to bring a mine into production, it seems prudent to maintain at least a 20-year aggregate supply. Significantly, over the next 20 years, the County will need to permit an additional 845 million tons of aggregate resources to maintain a 20-year supply for the years from 2015 to 2034.

1.1.2.4 Contract Royalties

The Federal Government owns a very large mineral resource of valuable sand and gravel in Soledad Canyon. Through a public competitive bidding process, the Federal Government, through the BLM, entered into the Federal Contracts with TMC, granting to TMC the right to mine 56 million tons of sand and gravel in Soledad Canyon. TMC agreed to pay the Federal Government a minimum of $28,000,000 in royalties of which 76 percent ($21,280,000) will go to a Federal Land and Reclamation Fund and 20 percent ($5,600,000) to the Federal treasury. Four percent of the royalties (or $1,120,000) will go to the State of California, and half of those receipts ($560,000) will go to the County.

1.1.3 Land Use Plan Conformance

The Proposed Action is in conformance with BLM's South Coast Resource Management Plan (May 1994) that states:

> Unless specifically prohibited by existing or future withdrawal,...BLM split estate lands are available for mineral leasing, subject to applicable stipulations (page 16).

No withdrawals are proposed or in effect in the Project area.

1.2 GENERAL LOCATION

1.2.1 Regional Setting

The Project site lies within an unincorporated area of the County of Los Angeles in the western San Gabriel Mountains in the area known as Soledad Canyon. Soledad Canyon is located in the Santa Clara River Valley, in the eastern portion of the region known as the Santa Clarita Valley. Figure 1.2-1 shows the boundaries of this administrative area. The valley lies between the boundaries of the Angeles National Forest to the north and south. The western boundary is the Ventura County line, and eastward, the planning area extends beyond Agua Dulce but does not include the unincorporated community of Acton. Figure 1.2-2 shows the regional location of the Project.

The valley is the point of convergence of major transportation and utility corridors. Interstate 5 (Golden State Freeway), State Highway 14 (Antelope Valley Freeway), and the Southern Pacific Railroad are the main transportation routes through this region. Two major aqueducts (California and Los Angeles) traverse the valley. Oil and natural gas pipelines and power lines enter the valley from the north through Tejon Pass, cross the Valencia-Newhall community, and exit near Newhall Pass (County 1990). In addition, the Santa Clara River traverses the valley from east to west. Portions of the Santa Clara River are designated as Significant Ecological Areas (SEAs) by the County.

The Santa Clara River, which drains a portion of the San Gabriel Mountains, supports several riparian vegetation communities along its course in this region. Riparian communities are considered sensitive in California, and these communities are important for wildlife as resources for nesting, refuge, and food. The riparian communities found along the river and its tributaries include cottonwood-willow woodland, willow scrub, mulefat scrub, and sycamore-alder woodland. The Santa Clara River and its tributaries also provide regional wildlife movement corridors by providing access between the areas of the Angeles National Forest north and south of the Antelope Valley Freeway.

The San Gabriel Mountains are part of the larger Transverse Ranges that run eastward from the coast at Santa Barbara to the Mojave and Colorado Deserts. The Transverse Ranges form a geographic northern boundary for southern California and have been identified as an important transition zone for northern and southern California vegetation elements. Specifically, the western San Gabriel Mountains form a transition zone between coastal and desert vegetation communities. The undeveloped portions of the region are a mosaic of coastal sage scrub, mixed chaparral, and semidesert chaparral communities. Coastal sage scrub is considered a regionally sensitive vegetation community because it is disappearing due to development. In this region, the coastal sage scrub and semidesert chaparral communities intergrade on south- and northwest-facing slopes, while mixed chaparral is found mainly on north-facing slopes where more seasonal moisture is available.

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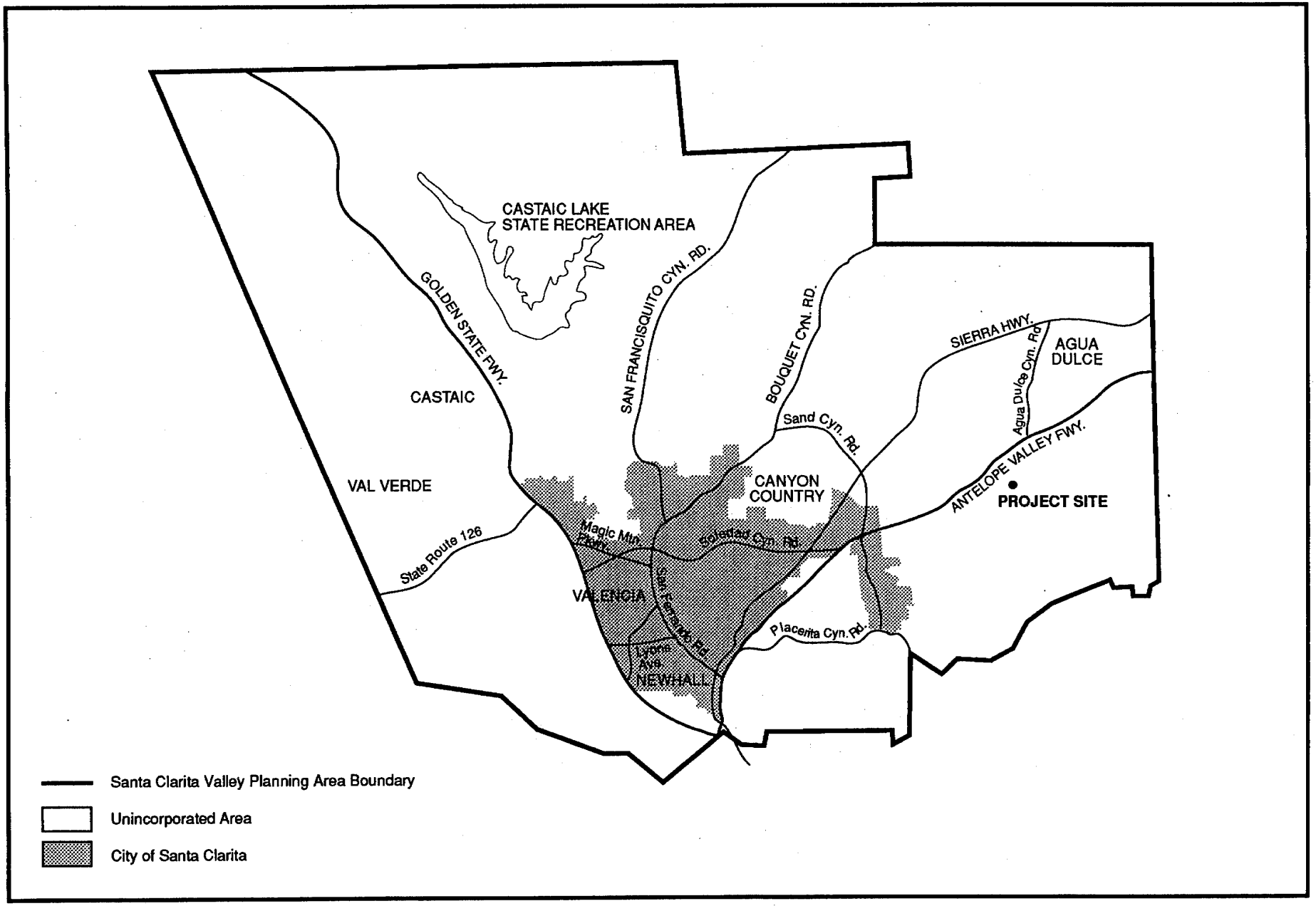

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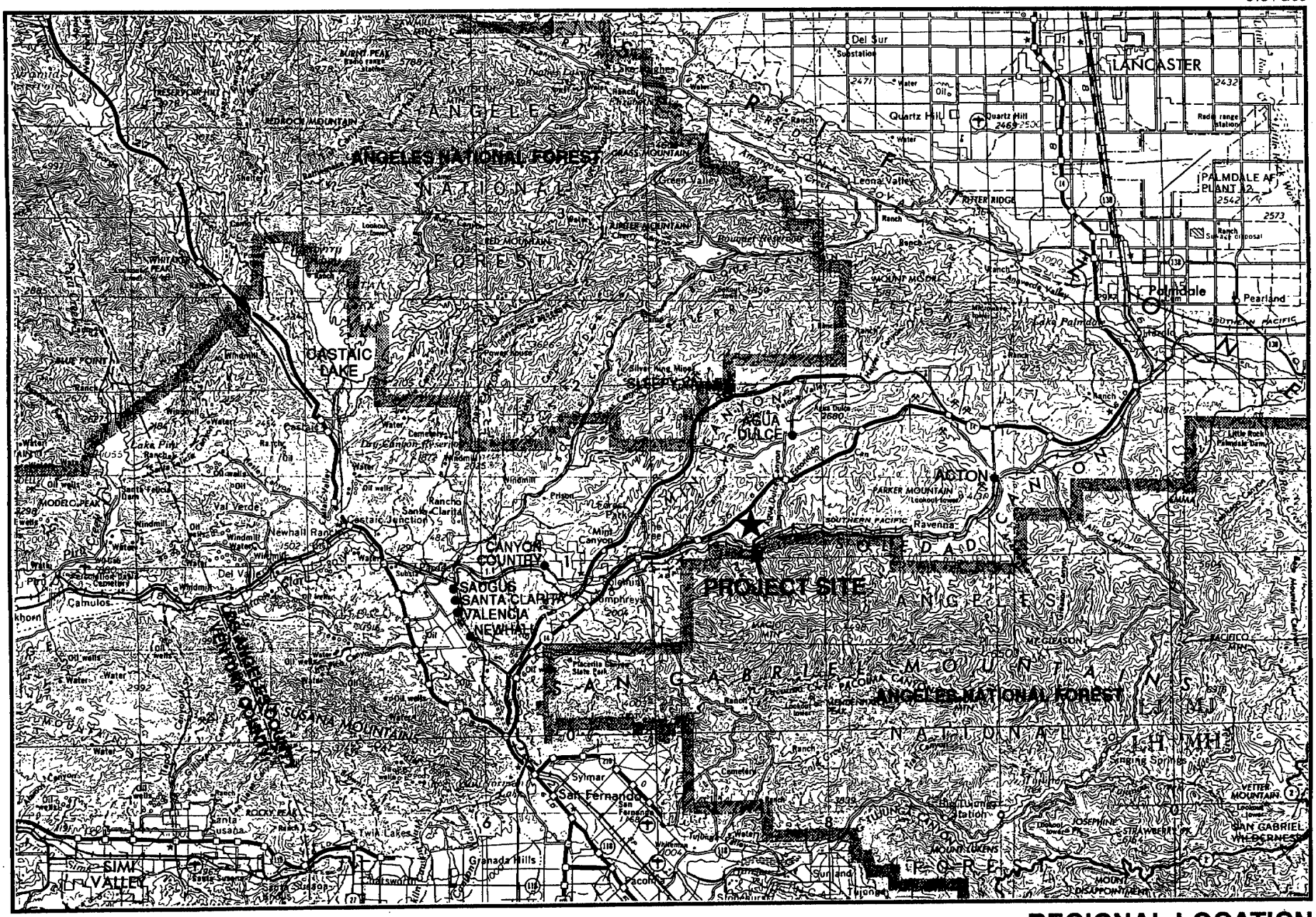
NOT TO SCALE

Source: Santa Clarita Valley Area Plan
Dept. of Regional Planning
County of Los Angeles, 1990

SANTA CLARITA VALLEY
ADMINISTRATIVE BOUNDARIES
Figure 1.2-1



REGIONAL LOCATION
Figure 1.2-2

1.2.2 Local Setting

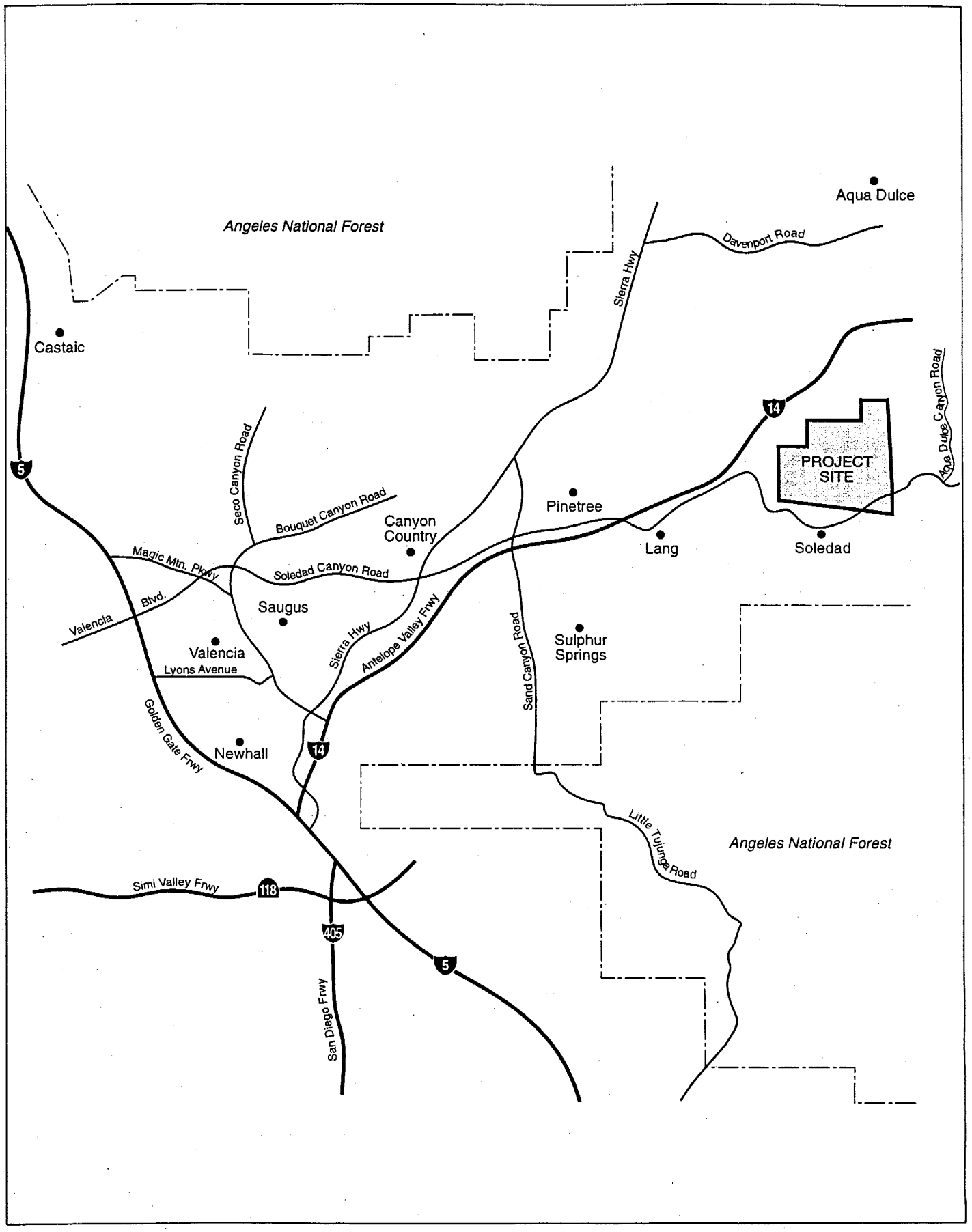
The Project site is located in the eastern portion of the Santa Clarita Valley in an unincorporated area within the roughly triangular area between the Antelope Valley Freeway, Soledad Canyon Road, and Agua Dulce Road. Figure 1.2-3 shows the local setting of the Project. The City of Santa Clarita (shown on Figure 1.2-1) is located in the central portion of the valley and is made up of several interrelated communities including Newhall, Placerita Canyon, Valencia, Saugus, and Canyon Country. The unincorporated areas that surround the City of Santa Clarita are mostly undeveloped or developed to lower-density residential and rural uses. The main planning communities within the unincorporated areas include Castaic, Val Verde, and Agua Dulce. In addition, the smaller, rural areas of Soledad, Lang, Pinetree, Sulphur Springs, and Vasquez Rocks are located in the surrounding area within a 5-mile radius of the Project site. Land uses within the City of Santa Clarita boundaries are designated by the City's General Plan, while the main planning document for the unincorporated areas is the Santa Clarita Valley Area Plan (County 1990) under the County General Plan.

Spring Canyon and Bee Canyon lie west/northwest of the Project site and are separated by the Antelope Valley Freeway. To the northwest, Tick Canyon traverses through the area known as Pinetree. Figure 1.2-4 presents the local land use designations. Existing residential use in these canyon areas is designated for nonurban, low-density uses. In addition, higher-density residential development is occurring in Pinetree. The land use designation for the Pinetree area changed from the designation of Hillside Management (HM) to Nonurban 2 (N2) in the Santa Clarita Valley Area Plan (County 1990) and the most recent amendment of the Land Use Policy Map (County 1992). However, recently proposed residential projects may require a higher-density urban designation; therefore, ultimate land use designations and zoning must be made consistent with any approved residential projects in the area. Local land use planning must also be consistent with state requirements regarding areas on or adjacent to Regionally Significant mineral resource lands.

Bee Canyon lies southeast of the Antelope Valley Freeway and abuts the northern boundary of the Project site. The canyon is vacant open space containing one abandoned residential dwelling. The County land use designation for this area changed from nonurban, low-density uses to higher-density urban uses.

The mountainous, vacant lands north of the Project site are currently designated by the County as open space lands. The lands east in the vicinity of Agua Dulce Canyon are designated as HM areas in the Santa Clarita Area Plan (County 1990) and are currently zoned as agricultural lands. Agua Dulce Canyon and the Santa Clara River are classified as floodplain areas by the County.

The Santa Clara River is adjacent to the southern border of the Project site and crosses through the southeast corner of Area B. Bear Canyon and Bee Canyon are two tributaries that discharge to the river in the site vicinity. Current land uses associated with the river corridor include mining and industrial activities, rural residential, and recreational uses (recreation vehicle [RV] parks and camping). The predominant land use in the Project vicinity is surface mining, and other uses include sparse rural residential and open space.



LOCAL SETTING
Figure 1.2-3

N Not to Scale

PROJECT SITE

ANGELES NATIONAL FOREST

- PROJECT BOUNDARY
- N1 NONURBAN 1 (0.5 DU/AC)
- N2 NONURBAN 2 (1.0 DU/AC)
- U1 URBAN 1 (1.1 TO 3.3 DU/AC)
- U2 URBAN 2 (3.4 TO 6.6 DU/AC)
- C COMMERCIAL
- M INDUSTRY
- P PUBLIC SERVICE FACILITIES
- O OPEN SPACE
- HM HILLSIDE MANAGEMENT
- S SIGNIFICANT ECOLOGICAL AREAS
- W FLOODWAY/FLOODPLAIN
- NF ANGELES NATIONAL FOREST
- CITY OF SANTA CLARITA
- NOISE IMPACT CORRIDOR

(A) BEE CANYON, PROPOSED MOBILE HOME PARK DEVELOPMENT

(B) SHADOW PINES DEVELOPMENT

(C) RIO DULCE DEVELOPMENT

SANTA CLARA RIVER FLOODWAY BOUNDARY

N

FEET

0 3000

Source: Santa Clarita Valley Area Plan, Land Use Map
Dept. of Regional Planning
County of Los Angeles, 1992

LOS ANGELES COUNTY LAND USE DESIGNATIONS FOR PROJECT VICINITY
Figure 1.2-4

The area to the south and southeast of Area B is Angeles National Forest land. Mining has been and is still occurring in the areas adjacent to Area B at its eastern boundary.

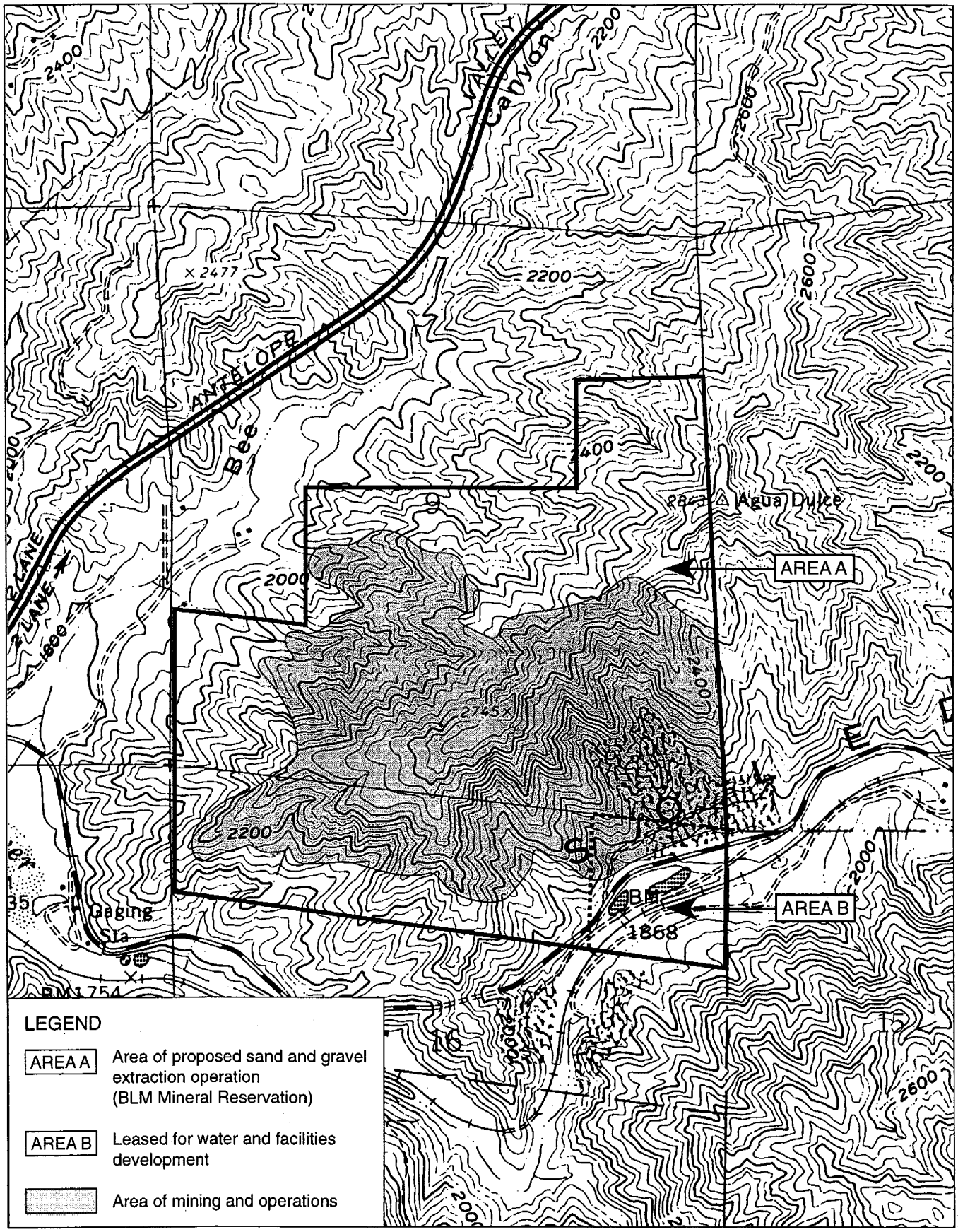
1.2.3 Project Site Location

The site for the proposed mining operation is located north of the City of Los Angeles in Soledad Canyon in Sections 9 and 16 of Township 4 North, Range 14 West; San Bernardino Base and Meridian (SBBM). This area is within an unincorporated area of the County north of Soledad Canyon Road, south of the Antelope Valley Freeway, and west of Agua Dulce Canyon. Figures 1.2-3 and 1.2-4 show the Project site in relation to the local setting.

For purposes of analysis and discussion, the Project site has been divided into two areas based on Project use and land ownership. These areas and the Project footprint are presented on Figure 1.2-5. The proposed surface mining operation will be conducted within the 460 acres of Area A. Area A is a "split estate" with the surface estate owned in fee by Canyon Country Enterprises, Inc., doing business as Curtis Sand and Gravel, while mineral ownership is held by the United States of America and managed by the BLM.

Under the Federal Stock-Raising Homestead Act, pursuant to which the split estate was created, the mineral estate is dominant over the surface estate, and the mining operator is entitled to occupy as much of the surface as it needs for all purposes reasonably incident to mining or related mining activities. In recent litigation to clarify the relative rights of the mineral and surface estate owners, the U.S. District Court, Central District, ruled that the surface estate owner cannot interfere in any way with TMC's mining Project.

The Project processing facilities will be located primarily within the 40 acres of Area B. Therefore, all of the proposed mining and operations will be located north of Soledad Canyon Road and the Santa Clara River. Water resources for the Project will be developed in Area B and the area southwest of Area B, both of which are owned by the C.A. Rasmussen Company and are presently under a nonexclusive lease by TMC.



SITE MAP SHOWING PROJECT BOUNDARY, SUBAREAS

Figure 1.2-5

1.3 RELATIONSHIP TO BLM POLICIES, PLANS, AND PROGRAMS

The Record of Decision for the Resource Management Plan (RMP) and EIS for the South Coast Planning Area of the BLM was published in June 1994. The purpose of this document is to guide the management of resources contained within BLM public lands in the five-county South Coast Planning Area.

Within this document, information on mineral resources, including salable minerals (sand and gravel), is inventoried and assessed to provide for multiple resource impact analysis in support of land use planning decisions. Mineral resource information must be addressed by the BLM in land use planning as required by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1701, 1702, 1711, 1712). Also, the BLM is required to identify mineral needs to assure the availability of material critical to commerce, the economy, and national security in accordance with the National Materials and Mineral Policy, Research and Development Act of 1980 (30 U.S.C. 1601). Salable minerals are generally those that may be sold from BLM public lands and BLM split-estate lands under the Material Sale Act of 1947, as amended.

Due to the rapid rate of growth and urban expansion within the South Coast planning area, there is also an increasing demand for sand and gravel for use as construction aggregate material. As existing sources are depleted and other potential supply areas are covered by development, new sources will be needed. BLM public and split-estate lands within the planning area are known to contain several areas with valuable sand and gravel deposits (BLM split-estate refers to areas where the surface estate is owned by private or state or local government, and the minerals have been retained as federally owned and administered by BLM). As discussed above, these areas have been designated as regionally significant by the SMGB through state classification authorized under the SMARA of 1975.

For federal purposes, the Project site is located in the Los Angeles-Orange County management area. This area includes approximately 5,613 acres of BLM public land and 36,279 acres of BLM split-estate land. In terms of land ownership, Area A of the Project is designated by the RMP Map 1B as Split-Estate Land. Area B of the Project and the area immediately south of the site are designated as Private Land. Four alternatives were originally considered in the South Coast RMP and EIS. With regard to salable minerals in the Los Angeles-Orange County management area, the proposed alternative of the plan is Alternative 1 (Continuation of Present Management). While under BLM administration, all BLM public and split-estate lands would be available for sand and gravel sales. Under this alternative, development of sand and gravel resources is expected to occur on split-estate lands in the Agua Dulce vicinity within the area identified by the CDMG as containing significant construction aggregate material resources.

Based on the aforementioned special reports by the CDMG and SMGB designation final Supplemental EIRs, BLM assigned mineral potential classifications for the entire planning area including all BLM public lands, other federal land, state-owned land, and private land. This procedure was used to give a better overall view of the mineral situation and how past mineral activity and present mineral classification could affect BLM public lands and BLM split-estate lands. Generally, areas classified by the CDMG as MRZ-2 were assigned high potential values, areas classified as MRZ-3 or MRZ-4 were given moderate potential values, and areas classified

as MRZ-1 were assigned low potential values. The Los Angeles-Orange County management area is thus classified as having 8,865 acres of BLM split-estate acreage with high potential for sand and gravel resources including a major known deposit of sand and gravel in the Soledad Canyon area. This deposit, including the Project site estimated to be several hundred million tons, is designated by the state as a Regionally Significant source of aggregate.

The Project site is identified in the RMP as a potential production site. The RMP states that, unless existing or future withdrawals are proposed, BLM split-estate lands are available for mineral leasing, subject to applicable stipulations. No withdrawals are proposed or are in effect for the Project area.

The following BLM land classifications and resources are not directly or indirectly affected by the Project: Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, Farm Lands, Native American Religious Concerns, Wild and Scenic Rivers, and Wilderness Areas. These critical elements will not be discussed in further detail in this document. Therefore, according to the main planning documents for BLM lands, the proposed sand and gravel development by TMC would be consistent with BLM RMP management objectives under the proposed alternative for the Los Angeles-Orange County management area.

1.4 RELATIONSHIP TO NON-BLM POLICIES, PLANS, AND PROGRAMS

1.4.1 Federal Agencies

The Angeles National Forest lies generally to the south and southeast of the site. The forest includes Section 15, in which mining has been and still is occurring and also forms the eastern boundary of Area B (shown on Figure 1.2-4). Portions of the forest have been mined by three other operators within the National Forest. The Tujunga District of the Angeles National Forest administers the Angeles National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan of 1987 (Forest Plan). The Forest Plan is a federal action and serves as the primary planning document for the management of the land and resources within the boundaries of the Angeles National Forest. Mining is allowed in the forest. In addition, the Forest Plan coordinates the exploration and development of minerals so they will be consistent with the use and protection of other resource values and provides for the reclamation of land that has been or will be mined (TetraTech, Inc. 1991).

The County General Plan and zoning ordinances govern land use development in the unincorporated lands that are not administered by the Forest Service. The General Plan describes those public lands administered by the U.S. Forest Service as open space. While Areas A and B (where surface mining will take place) are not located on National Forest Lands, the project proponent has leased land south of the mining site from the C.A. Rasmussen Co. that is in the National Forest boundary for water development to support the mining operations. P.W. Gillibrand Company has been issued permits to mine within a 13,500-acre claim area in the forest that is located generally southwest of the Project site. The Gillibrand claim area is mainly not for PCC minerals but includes areas within the claim area for titanium mining.

1.4.2 State of California

The State of California established policy for mineral extraction, which is considered essential to the economic well being of the state and needs of society, through the SMARA. In addition to providing policy for mining and reclamation of mined lands, this Act provided for the designation of specific areas of statewide or regional significance for mineral development.

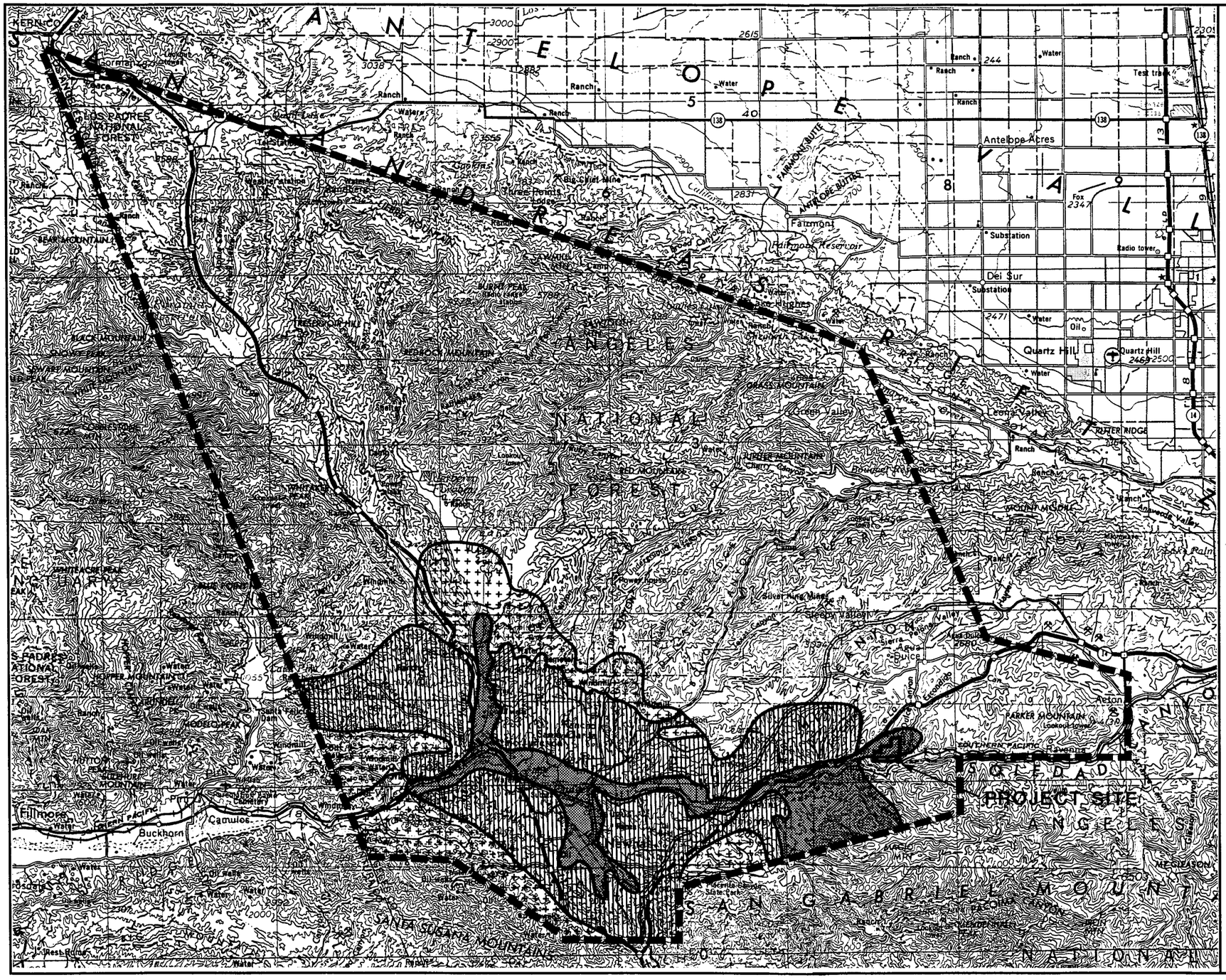
Sand and gravel resource areas in California are classified into MRZs by the CDMG under guidelines adopted by the SMGB. The classifications of sand and gravel resource areas assist the SMGB in its designation of lands containing aggregate resources that are to be considered Regionally Significant in accordance with SMARA. Results of mineral land classification undertaken by CDMG for individual P-C regions are reported in a series of special reports. Designations of Regionally Significant construction aggregate resource areas within individual P-C regions are reported in separate SMARA designation reports under the direction of the SMGB. This classification-designation process serves as a means of identifying and conserving these mineral resources and provides local agencies with information on the mineral resources within their jurisdiction. This information must then be considered in local planning decisions and the development and implementation of management policies.

The Project is covered by four state reports: (1) SMARA Final EIR No. 6, July 1985 (CDMG 1985); (2) Designation of Regionally Significant Construction Aggregate Resource Areas in the Saugus-Newhall and Palmdale Production-Consumption Regions, SMARA Designation Report No. 6, January 1987 (CDMG 1987b); (3) Mineral Land Classification of the Greater Los Angeles Area, 1987, Special Report 143, Part V Classification of Sand and Gravel Resource Areas, Saugus-Newhall Production-Consumption Region and Palmdale Production-Consumption Regions, January 1987, SMARA Designation Report No. 6 (CDMG 1987a); and (4) update of Mineral Land Classification of Portland Cement Concrete Aggregate in Ventura, Los Angeles, and Orange Counties, California, Part II - Los Angeles County, 1994. According to these reports, the site has been classified MRZ-2, an MRZ where adequate information indicates that significant mineral deposits are present or where there is a high probability of their presence. Figure 1.4-1 shows the mineral land classification of the Saugus-Newhall P-C Region, and Figure 1.4-2 shows the mineral land classification in the immediate vicinity of the Project site.

The Project site was formally designated by the SMGB as a Regionally Significant Construction Aggregate Resource Area. This state designation means that local planning agencies must assist in the management of land use that affects designated areas and emphasize the conservation and development of the identified area (SMARA Article 4, Section 2762). All cities and counties are required to incorporate Regionally Significant designation information into their General Plans. Lead Agencies must adopt statements of policy, recognizing the importance of these identified mineral resources, and they must develop implementation procedures. These procedures may include the imposition of conditions upon incompatible land uses in and surrounding MRZs. In addition, the local planning agencies must balance the mineral resource value against alternative land uses and consider the importance of the mineral resources to their market region as a whole and not just their importance to the local planning agencies' area of jurisdiction. Prior to permitting a use that would threaten the potential to extract mineral resources in the state-designated area, local planning agencies must prepare a statement specifying the reasons for permitting the proposed use and forward a copy to the State Geologist and the SMGB for review in accordance with SMARA.

1.4.3 Local Planning

The County's Santa Clarita Valley Area Plan (adopted in February 1984 and revised in December 1990) and the County zoning ordinances provide planning policy for unincorporated County areas including the Project site. The majority of the Project site is currently designated as an HM area on the land use policy map of the Area Plan. This area is also zoned M-2 (Heavy Manufacturing) by the County, and mineral extraction activities are allowed by a surface mining permit and require a Reclamation Plan. The Project site has been mined for 2 decades in accordance with a CUP, and the Proposed Action is consistent with the policy of the County Board of Supervisors to "protect important mineral resources by a long-range approach toward mineral resource utilization" as described in the Santa Clarita Valley Area Plan. In addition, local planning policy is required to be consistent with state policy concerning Regionally Significant Construction Aggregate Resource Areas. The following General Plan policies are consistent with this state policy:



Source: California Department of Conservation
Division of Mines and Geology, 1987a

MRZ-1 Areas where adequate information indicates that no significant mineral deposits are present, or little likelihood exists for their presence.

MRZ-2 Areas where adequate information indicates that significant mineral deposits are present, or there is a high likelihood for their presence.

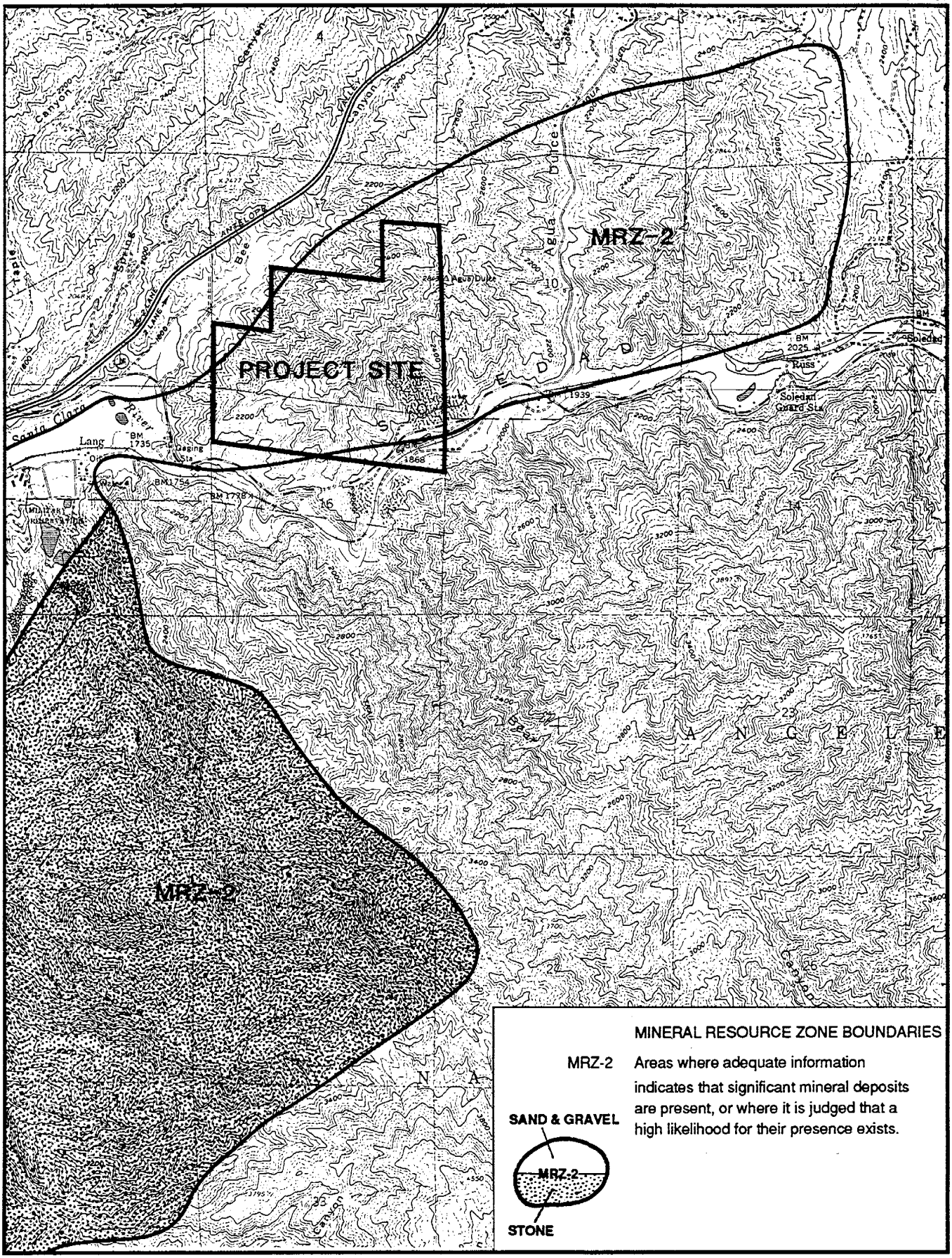
MRZ-3 Areas containing mineral deposits, the significance of which cannot be evaluated from available data.

MRZ-4 Areas where available information is inadequate for assignment to any other mineral resource area.

Unclassified Area

Boundary of Saugus-Newhall Production Region

MINERAL LAND CLASSIFICATION OF THE SAUGUS-NEWHALL PRODUCTION-CONSUMPTION REGION
Figure 1.4-1



SOURCE: California Department of Conservation, Division of Mines and Geology, 1987 (b).

MINERAL LAND CLASSIFICATION MAP
Figure 1.4-2

- "Protect known mineral resource reserves (including sand and gravel) from encroachment of incompatible uses." (Land Use Chapter, Policy 11, p. LU-5)

- "Within identified mineral resource areas, proposed development other than open space, passive recreation, agriculture, extraction or surface mining shall be reviewed for compatibility with existing or potential mineral resource production." This review will consider "[t]he value of mineral resources located within the vicinity of the proposed development." (Land Use Element, Appendix A, Conditions and Standards No. 16, p. LU-A20.)

- "In addition, the proposed development shall be designed so that it does not inhibit the future development of extractive, surface mining or energy production facilities and shall make provisions to buffer the proposed use from existing or future mineral resource activities." (Land Use Element, Appendix A, Conditions and Standards No. 16, p. LU-A20.)

- "California is the largest producer of sand and gravel in the nation. The greater Los Angeles area is the nation's leading producer for its geographic size. Sand and gravel reserves have declined in the past due to the encroachment of incompatible development. These resources must be protected and conserved." (Conservation, Open Space and Recreation Element, p. OS-4.)

Apparent inconsistencies exist within local County planning and local, federal, and state planning for areas adjacent to the Project. The update of the Santa Clarita Valley Area Plan (December 1990) allows consideration of a mobile home park in a portion of adjacent Bee Canyon through the submittal and approval of a Specific Plan. Yet in apparent contradiction, the Area Plan also states the objective of encouraging mobile home parks to locate in residential areas, where zoning permits, and to specifically exclude them from industrial areas that would include M-2 designations (such as the Project site). The Area Plan also goes on to state that HM areas are classified as "nonurban" where slopes generally exceed 25 percent. A portion of Bee Canyon next to the TMC Project site is comprised of these steep slopes.

Furthermore, as identified in Section 1.4.2, the CDMG has identified both compatible and incompatible land uses as a guide to local governments in establishing land uses on or adjacent to lands that have been designated as Regionally Significant mineral resource areas. Incompatible uses include both high- and low-density residential uses such as placement of a mobile home park in Bee Canyon.

The Project site is located outside of the City of Santa Clarita boundary and is not within its sphere of influence (SOI). Following completion of the City's General Plan in 1991, portions of the unincorporated areas that contain federal (BLM) lands and areas zoned M-2 by the County were included within a proposed expansion of the SOI boundaries for the City of Santa Clarita. As previously discussed, the BLM has indicated the importance of the area as a regional resource for mineral extraction. The BLM subsequently submitted a request to the LAFCO that planning for the area recognize the United States (through the BLM) as the title holder for the property, that land use plans for the area reflect the state of California mineral resource classification, and that land use planning incorporate mineral resource development as the

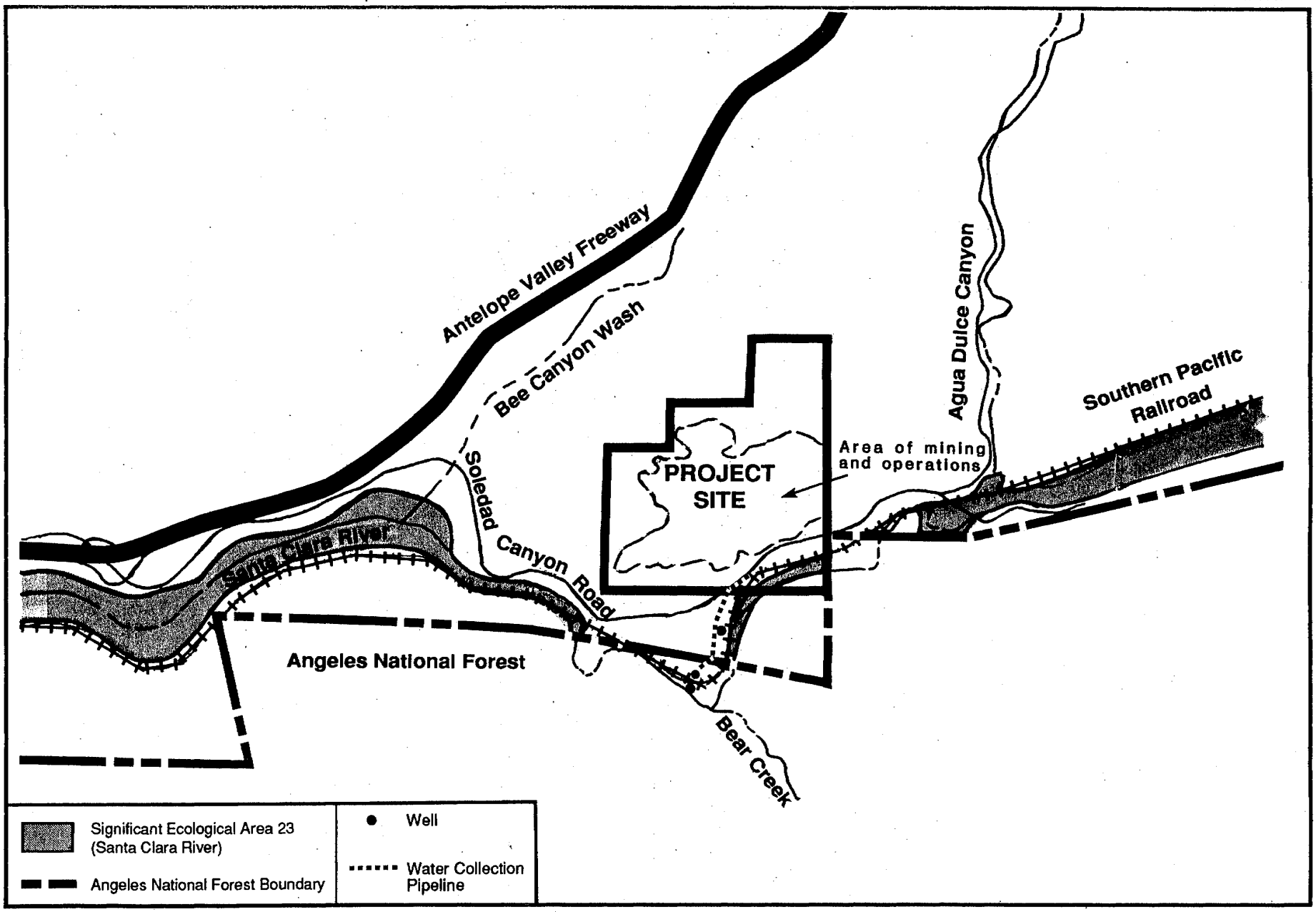
primary and highest and best use. Inclusion of these areas within the City of Santa Clarita's SOI was subsequently denied by LAFCO; therefore, the existing land use planning policies remain under federal, state, and county jurisdiction.

The Proposed Action was also reviewed for consistency with the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) Regional Comprehensive Plan and Guide ([Regional Plan] SCAG 1995). Components of the Regional Plan that respond directly to federal, state, and local planning pertain to growth management, regional mobility, air quality, water quality, and hazardous waste management. The main components as related to the TMC Project are growth management, regional mobility, and air quality. The Proposed Action was found to be consistent with the strategic goals and component strategies set in the Regional Plan. Goals for improvements are related to improvements in the standard of living, quality of life, and equity for each of the components.

One of the main purposes of the TMC Project falls in direct line with a key goal of the regional mobility plan, which is to provide a continued investment over the next 20 years in infrastructure such as new transportation products and more travel/transportation alternatives. Because these types of projects, such as new roads, rail lines, and airports, result in a demand for concrete in their construction, TMC will be able to help meet these goals. Also, because the Project will be located in proximity to the Los Angeles Basin (as compared to other available sites), there will be a decrease in air pollutant load for the transport of aggregate materials into the Basin as compared to mining sites at more distant locations. Another component, growth management, takes into consideration design and planning at the local level to help reduce development costs while achieving balanced communities. Because the need for infrastructure is related to growth management planning and costs of construction are also a part of achieving these goals, construction costs can be kept down by having a local aggregate resource to supply major infrastructure projects. The TMC Project is consistent with these goals. Another component of growth management is consistency with local land use practices that support regional environmental objectives. As presented in the land use section of this EIS, the Proposed Action is consistent with currently written land use designations.

1.4.4 County of Los Angeles Significant Ecological Areas

A portion of the Santa Clara River flows through the south portion of the Project and also is within the boundaries of the Angeles National Forest. The sections of river east and west of the Angeles National Forest boundaries are designated by the County as Significant Ecological Area (SEA) No. 23 due in part to the presence of essential habitat for the unarmored threespine stickleback, a Federal and State Endangered fish. Figure 1.4-3 shows the Angeles National Forest boundary and the designation of the SEA in the Project area. Sand and gravel quarrying is considered to be a compatible land use within lands administered by the Angeles National Forest and within SEAs when it is determined to be compatible with biotic resources that have been identified by a detailed biotic survey such as the survey conducted for TMC's Project (see Section 3.1.8, Biota).



SIGNIFICANT ECOLOGICAL AREAS WITHIN THE PROJECT VICINITY
Figure 1.4-3

Downstream from the site, approximately 12 miles of the river are within the City of Santa Clarita limits and are currently under the jurisdiction of the City Department of Parks and Recreation. Portions of the river in this section are also designated as sensitive ecological areas. The City of Santa Clarita has proposed a River Corridor Plan to improve and develop the corridor for recreational and educational uses and provide stewardship for riparian habitats for the preservation and enhancement of sensitive habitat areas, open space, and water recharge areas. The Project site is outside of the City of Santa Clarita's Sphere of Influence; therefore, the River Corridor Plan is not applicable to the section of river within Area B of the Project site. The state has recommended including the Santa Clara River on the California Recreational Trails Map, and the County has placed the river on its Master Plan of Regional Trails.